

Remarks

This Request for Continued Examination is in reply to the Office Action mailed August 1, 2005. A Petition for Extension of Time is submitted herewith, together with the appropriate fee. No fee is due for the addition of new claims.

I. Summary of Examiner's Rejections

Prior to the Office Action mailed August 1, 2005, Claims 1-22 were pending in the Application. In the Office Action, Claims 1-22 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Achacoso et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,161,149, hereafter Achacoso) in view of Ozzie et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,640,241, hereafter Ozzie).

II. Summary of Applicant's Amendment

The present Response amends Claims 1 and 11; cancels Claim 19; and adds new Claim 23, leaving for the Examiner's present consideration Claims 1-18 and 20-23. Reconsideration of the Application, as amended, is respectfully requested. Applicant respectfully reserves the right to prosecute any originally presented or canceled claims in a continuing or future application.

III. Claim Rejections under 35 U.S.C. §103(a)

In the Office Action mailed August 1, 2005, Claims 1-22 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Achacoso (U.S. Patent No. 6,161,149) in view of Ozzie (U.S. Patent No. 6,640,241).

Claim 1

Claim 1 has been amended by the current Response to more clearly define the embodiment therein. As amended, Claim 1 defines:

- 1. A message routing mechanism for a collaboration system that supports conversations between participants over multiple business protocols, comprising:*

a central collaboration hub hosting a plurality of collaboration spaces and capable of receiving and sending messages between participants as part of a conversation between the participants;

a plurality of business protocol handlers, each of which are configured to use a different business protocol, and which may be used by a participant to participate in the conversation,

wherein a conversation is a collective set of said messages, and wherein each of said collaboration spaces stores the set of messages for a particular conversation, and may be accessed by the participants using any of a plurality of business protocols, and wherein each combination of collaboration space and business protocol is associated with a unique uniform resource locator; and

a messaging protocol that allows each participant to specify a routing information and business protocol used by that participant for a given conversation, wherein the business protocol is specified by the uniform resource locator used by the participant to communicate with the collaboration space.

Claim 1, as currently amended, defines that the system comprises a central collaboration hub hosting a plurality of collaboration spaces, and a plurality of business protocol handlers, each of which are configured to use a different business protocol, and which may be used by a participant to participate in a conversation. Claim 1 further defines that each combination of collaboration space and business protocol is associated with a unique uniform resource locator. A messaging protocol allows each participant to specify a routing information and business protocol used by that participant for a given conversation, wherein the routing information is specified by the participant in a message header, and wherein the business protocol is specified by the uniform resource locator used by the participant to communicate with the collaboration space. Applicant respectfully submits that these features are not disclosed by the cited references.

The advantages of the embodiment currently defined by Claim 1 include that it is independent of a particular business protocol vocabulary, so it can support any standards-based or proprietary business protocol or vocabulary, and allows for conversational communication between collaboration participants that utilize different business protocols. When the system receives a message on a particular business protocol destined for a particular conversation (i.e. at the particular URL assigned to that conversation/protocol combination), then it automatically knows

which collaboration space or conversation the message should go to, and which business protocol is being used by the participant. With this information, the system can invoke the necessary business protocol handler to handle the message. This technique also allows a single collaboration space to support multiple business protocols and multiple conversations, by using multiple URLs. Each combination of collaboration space and business protocol is associated with a unique uniform resource locator.

Achacoso discloses a system and method for communicating information among members of a distributed discussion group having peripheral communication devices, and which includes communication between the peripheral communication devices and a central agent. As disclosed therein, the central agent receives and stores messages intended for at least one other group member. It creates a notice informing the group member that such a message exists and containing a channel (e.g., a hyperlink) directly to the memory location of the message. The other group member may then elect to retrieve the message, and may also elect to reply to the message. (Abstract). Groups may be self-initiated, i.e. one person can identify e-mail addresses for a desired group of colleagues, friends, or family, name the group, and provide a uniform resource locator (URL) for a group conference. The system pushes an e-mail notice to the desired group, with the URL. The recipients, by clicking on the URL, are brought to a conference area. (Column 6, lines 41-55).

Ozzie discloses a method and apparatus for activity-based collaboration by a computer system equipped with a communications manager. The activity includes a tool for causing generation of data change requests, called deltas, responsive to user interactions. The activity also has a data-change engine for maintaining data in preferably non-volatile, persistent memory pursuant to a data model. The data-change engine includes a tool end for receiving deltas from the tool, providing the deltas with activity-specific commands for carrying out the request, and providing notification to the tool of data changes caused by delta execution. The data-change engine also includes a dynamics manager end for receiving, from a dynamics manager, data-change directions to execute the deltas, i.e., perform the deltas' commands to make the requested changes to the data. (Column 3, line 59 - Column 4, line 9). Each peer unit includes a dynamics manager for coordinating processing of deltas, and a communications manager for controlling communication

between the peer units. The responsibilities of the communications manager include transmitting and receiving messages over the network. (Column 16, lines 33-39).

Applicant respectfully submits that, as described above, Achacoso discloses a centralized system for communicating information among members of a distributed discussion group having peripheral communication devices. One person can identify e-mail addresses for a desired group of colleagues, and push out an e-mail including a uniform resource locator (URL) for a group conference. Recipients, by clicking on the URL, are brought to the conference area. However, this is different from the feature defined by Claim 1, wherein each combination of collaboration space and business protocol is associated with a unique uniform resource locator. Claim 1 has been amended to more clearly define that the system therein comprises a plurality of business protocol handlers, each of which are configured to use a different business protocol, and which may be used by a participant to participate in the conversation, wherein a conversation may be accessed by the participants using any of a plurality of business protocols, and wherein each combination of collaboration space and business protocol is associated with a unique uniform resource locator. Claim 1 has been further amended to define that the business protocol is specified by the uniform resource locator used by the participant to communicate with the collaboration space. Thus, unlike the system defined by Achacoso, in which a participant must use a particular URL to participate in a conversation; as defined by Claim 1, a participant may use any URL that corresponds to the business protocol that participant wishes to use. Thus, unlike Achacoso, a single collaboration space can support multiple business protocols using multiple URLs.

With regard to Ozzie, in the Office Action mailed August 1, 2005, it was proposed that Ozzie teaches a delta that contains commands that are identified to a specific engine, and that this is the same as a messaging protocol that provides an ability to specify a business protocol for a given conversation. However, as described above, in Ozzie the deltas are data change requests, responsive to user interactions, and appear to be engine-specific commands. The data-change engine includes a tool end for receiving deltas from the tool, providing the deltas with activity-specific commands for carrying out the request, and providing notification to the tool of data changes caused by delta execution. The deltas appear to be different from the feature of a business protocol, for example EDI, XOCF or RosettaNET, that each business partner might use to design and implement

their own business rules to meet their own specific needs, including defining such features as how to read business messages and how to route messages to various recipients.

In view of the above comments, Applicant respectfully submits that Claim 1, as currently amended, is neither anticipated by nor obvious in view of the cited references, and reconsideration thereof is respectfully requested.

Claim 11

The comments provided above with respect to Claim 1 are hereby incorporated by reference. Claim 11 has been similarly amended to more clearly define the embodiment therein. For similar reasons as provided above with respect to Claim 1, Applicant respectfully submits that Claim 11, as amended, is likewise neither anticipated by, nor obvious in view of the cited references, and reconsideration thereof is respectfully requested.

Claims 2-10, 12-18 and 20

Claims 2-10, 12-18 and 20 are not addressed separately but it is respectfully submitted that these claims are allowable in view of the comments provided above. Applicant respectfully submits that Claims 2-10, 12-18 and 20 are similarly neither anticipated by, nor obvious in view of the cited references, and reconsideration thereof is respectfully requested. It is also submitted that these claims also add their own limitations which render them patentable in their own right. Applicant respectfully reserves the right to argue these limitations should it become necessary in the future.

Claim 19

Claim 19 has been canceled by the current Response, rendering moot the rejection of this claim.

IV. Additional Amendments

Claim 23 has been newly added by the present Response. Applicant respectfully requests that new Claim 23 be included in the Application and considered therewith.

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Response to Office Action dated: August 1, 2005
Response dated: January 31, 2006

V. Conclusion


In view of the above amendments and remarks, it is respectfully submitted that all of the claims now pending in the subject patent application should be allowable, and reconsideration thereof is respectfully requested. The Examiner is respectfully requested to telephone the undersigned if he can assist in any way in expediting issuance of a patent.

Enclosed is a PETITION FOR EXTENSION OF TIME UNDER 37 C.F.R. §1.136 for extending the time to respond up to and including February 1, 2006.

The Commissioner is authorized to charge any underpayment or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 06-1325 for any matter in connection with this response, including any fee for extension of time, which may be required.

Respectfully submitted,

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